

of 1949. For almost 20 years Mike served in the Office of the General Counsel. In addition, he served as counsel to the Office of Congressional Affairs, the Public Buildings Service, the Office of Government-wide Policy, and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer. In 2009, Mike was appointed to the Senior Executive Service. His list of opinions was endless, and his advice was sought after and followed.

Mike was justifiably proud of his legal contributions to GSA. However, his pride in his legal career was always exceeded by his pride in his family, his loving wife Shereen and his two outstanding sons, Mitchell and Corey. As a parent and husband, he was immensely proud of their accomplishments, their community involvement, and their love for each other. Mike made and maintained legions of friendships. His friends, who will cherish his memory and joyful spirit, will join me today with honor and great sadness to pay tribute to Michael J. Wooten.

RECOGNIZING THE UNITED  
STATES BORDER PATROL'S 85TH  
ANNIVERSARY

**HON. GABRIELLE GIFFORDS**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 12, 2009*

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize the brave men and women of the United States Border Patrol on the occasion of their agency's 85th anniversary.

The Border Patrol is the first line of defense for our nation. When it was established in the early part of the last century, its only posts were in Detroit, Michigan, and El Paso, Texas. The first agents were issued a badge and a revolver but they had to provide their own horses and saddles. Fortunately, the federal government paid for the feed.

Since its founding in 1924, the Border Patrol has grown and become a modern agency in every way. While some Border Patrol agents still ride horses, they all now use technology that their predecessors could not have imagined. Their tools and strategies have changed over time but their original mission remains the same. Each day they put on their uniforms and go out to protect and defend our borders.

Representing the 8th Congressional District in Southeastern Arizona, I have had the privilege of witnessing first-hand the Border Patrol's important work. It has been a highlight of my time in Congress to meet the men and women of the Tucson Sector of the Border Patrol who serve in one of the most challenging regions in our country. While the Tucson Sector represents only 13 percent of our border with Mexico, it accounts for close to 50 percent of the Border Patrol's apprehensions and drug seizures.

Under the exceptional leadership of Tucson Sector Chief Patrol Agent Robert Gilbert, great progress has been achieved in making our border more secure. Chief Gilbert has assembled an outstanding top management team including Deputy Chief Patrol Agent Robert Boatwright and Division Chiefs John Fitzpatrick and Jeanne Ray-Condon. In addition to implementing effective new strategies to deal with the high volume of drug and human smuggling, they have been responsive to my inquiries on behalf of constituents and

they have reached out to establish partnerships with local residents, ranchers and business owners.

The daily work of the Border Patrol is conducted by a force of hard working agents who carry out their duty with honor and distinction in some of the most rugged territory in the nation. I am proud of the relationship we have established with the Executive Board of the National Border Patrol Council, Local 2544, which represents the agents who work in the Tucson Sector. The agents on the ground are capably represented by Edward Tuffly, Local 2544 President, and the members of his Executive Board, Richard Martinez, Arturo Del Cueto, David Hull and Kurt Kelley. They keep me apprised of the needs and concerns of their members so that I can better fight for the resources that they must have to safely and effectively do their jobs.

My 9,000-square mile district includes 114 miles of international border. The Border Patrol's Tucson Sector is ground zero for the trafficking of humans and drugs into our country. Each day, the agents stationed here confront extraordinary risks to keep us safe. They face armed smugglers, harsh desert terrain and weather extremes. Each day, they illustrate what it means to be dedicated to duty and to country. Border Patrol agents serve us with patriotism and commitment and, as a nation, we owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude.

On behalf of the people of Arizona's 8th Congressional District, I extend my deepest appreciation to the men and women of the Tucson Sector of the Border Patrol and to their colleagues who work all across our borders.

COMMEMORATING REAR ADMIRAL  
BENNETT S. "BUD" SPARKS,  
U.S.C.G.

**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 12, 2009*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Rear Admiral Bennett "Bud" Sparks, who passed away May 22 after a lifetime of service to our country in the Coast Guard. Admiral Sparks' dedication to our country and his devotion to his family and his community deserve the highest commendation.

Admiral Sparks was born on October 10, 1925, and enlisted in the Coast Guard Reserve in 1942. His service spanned the globe and he saw action in the Atlantic, Pacific and European theaters of operations while flying as a combat aircrewman on both antisubmarine and air-sea rescue missions. After the War, he transferred to the active Coast Guard, where he received a field promotion to ensign in 1957 after having served in all enlisted ranks through chief petty officer.

He later flew mapping missions over Alaska from 1946 to 1957 for the Coast Guard and as a civilian. In 1966 he took up his first of nine consecutive commands over 23 years. During this time, he served as commanding officer of four Coast Guard Units, three Coast Guard Groups and two U.S. Navy Maritime Defense Zone Sectors. He attained flag rank in 1985, and received his second star in 1987.

Throughout his career, Admiral Sparks received numerous decorations for his service. Among them are the Navy Distinguished Public Service medal, two Coast Guard Distinguished Public Service medals, the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service medal, two Coast Guard commendation medals, the Coast Guard Achievement medal, the Arctic Service medal and, of course, his Coast Guard Combat Air Crew Wings.

Admiral Sparks was also a dedicated advocate for other reserve officers, fellow veterans and his community. He has served as both president of the Reserve Officer's Association of the United States—the first Coast Guard officer to hold this position—and as Chief of the U.S. Delegation to the Inter-Allied Confederation of Reserve Officers at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. He also chaired the California Veterans Board, where he worked tirelessly to ensure and enhance the rights and benefits of California Veterans, and was active on the board of the North Bay Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association of Northern California and Nevada.

However, perhaps the most enduring legacy of Admiral Sparks will be as the devoted husband of his wife Betty and as a loving father and grandfather. He is survived by four of his children; Bennett Jr., James, John and Julieann, his sister Doris, as well as his 11 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Madam Speaker, it is fitting at this time that we honor the life, service and memory of Admiral Sparks. His dedication to his country, his family and community are a testament to a great man who will long be remembered by those who knew him. We are lucky to have had him as a neighbor, a friend and an inspiration.

SOUTHWESTERN RANDOLPH—  
CLOSE TO PERFECTION

**HON. HOWARD COBLE**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 12, 2009*

Mr. COBLE. Madam Speaker, perfection is difficult to achieve in life—and perhaps even more so in sports—so it is noteworthy when any team comes so close to that achievement. A high school softball team in our congressional district came within one win of a perfect season. Even with that one loss, the team captured a state championship. On behalf of the citizens of the Sixth District of North Carolina, we wish to congratulate the softball team of Southwestern Randolph High School for winning the North Carolina 3A state championship. This is the second 3A title in three years the Cougars have won.

The team was led by Head Coach Steve Taylor who was able to bring the team together and make them believe they were capable of anything. As a result, the Cougars finished the season with an impressive 30–1 record that was capped with a 5–2 win over Asheville T.C. Roberson High School on June 6, 2009.

The championship season was a team effort led by seniors Anna Maness, Holly Berry, and Brittany Jones, juniors Erin Billups, Olivia Hickman, Cheryl Coley, and Hanna Hughes, sophomores Cynthia Hayes, Julia Callicutt,